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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BEIJING 001389

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SUBJECT: PRC/SUDAN: MFA DG CALLS NATIONAL RECONCILIATION
THE TOP PRIORITY

Classified By: Political Minister Counselor Aubrey Carlson. Reasons 1.
4 (b/d).

¶1. (C) Summary: MFA DG for West Asia and North Africa Song Aiguo told Special Envoy for Sudan General Scott Gration May 25 that China sought "comprehensive" ties with Sudan by developing links with authorities in the south but maintaining strong relations with Khartoum. Song urged the international community to work with the central Sudanese government to achieve stability and economic development and described national reconciliation as the top priority. Song outlined Chinese contributions to Sudan in the economic and commercial sphere and as related to the hybrid peace-keeping force. He asserted that lack of development was the "root cause" of the conflict in Darfur, adding that China's Special Representative on Darfur would announce a new package of assistance when he traveled to Sudan after the upcoming Doha conference. Calling the basic objectives of the U.S. and China in Sudan "similar," Song said that China wanted Sudan to remain united, and he outlined areas for increased U.S.-China coordination on Sudan issues. End summary.

¶2. (C) Special Envoy for Sudan General Scott Gration on May 25 described for MFA West Asian and North African Affairs Department Director General Song Aiguo U.S concerns over possible increased instability in Sudan and the need for the international community to take preventative measures before it was too late. Gration told Song that China and the United States needed to work together to maintain stability in Sudan, and he sought ideas from the Chinese side on how the international community could increase its contribution to the situation in Sudan. He noted that U.S.-China coordination on Sudan did not need to be in the public sphere. SE Gration said that China was a major power in the world and enjoyed strong influence in Sudan owing to its strong bilateral relationship and economic cooperation. Gration also invited China to send a delegation to the scheduled U.S.-hosted talks on renewing international support for the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in Washington DC on June 23.

China Seeks "Comprehensive" Relations with Sudan

¶3. (C) Song replied that U.S.-China coordination on Sudan demonstrated that the two countries had many areas of common interest. He claimed that Chinese engagement with the government in Khartoum proceeded on the basis of "equality and mutual respect," and while China engaged primarily with the Bashir government, it also sought "comprehensive" relations with Sudan by maintaining good relations with authorities in the south as well. Song stressed the importance of Sudan for security and stability in the greater region.

Development is the Number One Issue Facing Sudan

14. (C) In addition to political relations, Song said that China sought positive economic and commercial relations with Sudan, particularly in the energy sector, based on the principle of "mutual benefit and common development." He pointed to increasing trade relations (\$8.2 billion in 2008, according to Liu), Chinese assistance to infrastructure development, and agricultural cooperation as additional areas where China was making a contribution. He claimed that the deployment of Chinese engineers with the hybrid peacekeeping force and as well as through efforts to "improve the conditions for future deployments." China supported Khartoum's efforts to improve humanitarian conditions in Darfur and conditions for the provision of aid in the region. China contributed funding to humanitarian assistance efforts

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and encouraged others in the international community to do so, Song said.

Priorities for Engagement

16. (C) Turning to the priorities for the international community's engagement with Sudan, Song said that "job number one" in Sudan was to bring about national reconciliation through confidence-building efforts. To this end, China hoped to maintain good relations with major parties to try to bring them together. Song stressed the importance of economic development, adding that lack of development was the "root cause" of the Darfur issue. The international community had to make sustained efforts to provide humanitarian assistance. China's Special Representative on Darfur Liu Guijin would visit Sudan after the upcoming Doha conference, where he would announce a new package of Chinese assistance, according to Song.

17. (C) The international community also had to try to ensure the smooth deployment of the hybrid force, Song said, adding that progress on PKOs was generally on track, with many troops already deployed. The international community should assist the Sudanese government in bringing about suitable conditions for future deployment.

International Community Must Work with Bashir Government

18. (C) Song stressed the importance of the international community maintaining good relations with the Bashir government, noting that the current regime had achieved some positive accomplishments, including bringing about an end to the 22-year civil war and signing the CPA for southern Sudan. He noted that when the deployment of the hybrid force had reached a stalemate in 2007, the government in Khartoum paved the way for a solution. Acknowledging the challenges of working with Khartoum, Song said that the international community "needs a government there to talk to," adding that the regime was the choice of the Sudanese people. Song reported good progress on major Chinese development projects that resulted from cooperation with Khartoum. He claimed that the government's reaction to strong international pressure had shown great restraint and said the goal of the international community should be to convince Khartoum to "do a better job" on Darfur and southern Sudan.

U.S.-China Coordination

19. (C) Turning to areas for U.S.-China coordination on Sudan, Song said that China appreciated the efforts of the United States in Sudan, noting that we had maintained good relations with rebel groups as well as the central government. He noted SE Gration's hard work and success in convincing

Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) leader Khalil Ibrahim to travel to Doha for the last round of peace talks. Calling the basic objectives of the U.S. and China in Sudan "similar," Song said that China hoped to see Sudan remain united. Song reported that China would send Special Representative Liu to the upcoming Doha meeting to demonstrate Chinese support for the process. He said the potential for economic development in southern Sudan was enormous given its natural resources. The neighboring countries were important for Sudan's stability, and both the U.S. and China enjoyed good relations with those countries. Song said that countries in the region had expressed to the Chinese their strong concerns about a possible bifurcation of Sudan, which they saw as not in their interest.

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